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The "War on Cancer": Official Fictions and Harsh Facts

The official "communiques" from the so-called War on Cancer, like those of bygone days in Vietnam, convey an impression of slow, but steady, progress in a difficult struggle, beyond which shines light at the end of the tunnel.

Thus, just as General Westmoreland could proclaim on the eve of the Tet offensive, "I have never been more encouraged in my four years in Vietnam," the American Cancer Society (ACS) tells the public in a pamphlet titled, *The Hopeful Side of Cancer*, "Too few know that cancer is curable." The accompanying message from ACS, reminiscent of Vietnam optimism prior to the deluge, is that perseverance and more of the same efforts have been paying off and will continue to do so.

To cast doubt on these medical claims is not to wish they weren't so, nor to imply that one has a better formula for success. But the grisly fact is that the public is getting a snowjob about progress in cancer research and treatment, and a direct consequence of that deception is increased power for the cancer "establishment" to go on with more of the same. When the reports are favorable, there is little cause for pressure for a re-examination of the basic strategy.

Following a recent excursion through the statistical centers of the War on Cancer, SGR must regrettably report a fundamental but rarely discussed finding, namely, that after 25 years and several billion dollars expended on research for cures, survival rates for the most common types of cancer – those accounting for some 80 percent of all cases – are virtually unchanged; here and there a bit of improvement has occurred, but in some instances, the survival rates may even have worsened. As for the types that comprise the remaining 20 percent of all cancers, there has been some improvement in certain categories, but overall, these figures, too, are relatively unchanged.

Consider, for example, lung cancer, which, accounting for approximately 10 percent of all cancers, is one of the most prevalent forms of the disease. As reported in statistics that the National Cancer Institute periodically publishes under the infelicitous title of *End Results in Cancer*, the 5-year survival rate in 1940-49 was a grim four percent, which means that five years after diagnosis anytime during that period, only that slight percentage of the patients remained alive. In the period 1950-59, however, the five-year survival rate doubled, to eight percent. It remained there through 1960-64, and then rose by only one percentage point during 1965-69, which latter date, for five-year survival calculations, extends to 1973.

Putting these numbers in layman's terms, they mean that of those who were diagnosed in 1950 as having lung cancer, eight out of 100 were alive in 1954; of those who were diagnosed in 1969, the number surviving in 1973 was nine out of 100. The increase merits gratitude, but it scarcely supports the ACS's assertion that "Cancer is one of the

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In Brief

With little notice being taken, the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing last October put into effect a rule that no private publisher may have first crack at publishing information acquired at government expense without obtaining the Committee's approval. An example would be a textbook publisher seeking to use data developed through an Office of Education grant. So far, Committee staffers say, they're yet to receive any requests for permission, but they insist they'll crack down hard if violations come to their attention. Awareness of the new rule is seeping into federal agencies, and they're getting worried.

Robert H. Cannon Jr., chairman of engineering and applied science at Caltech, has been appointed chairman of the Assembly of Engineering at the National Academy of Sciences. The post, a parttime job, was formerly filled by National Academy of Engineering President Robert C. Seamans Jr., who has been nominated to head the newly created Energy Research and Development Administration.

Meanwhile, attempts to find a successor for the NAE president are bogged down. According to one member of the nominating committee, with National Academy of Sciences President Handler "running the show, you're not going to have any topflight talent eager to take the NAE job."

In response to President Ford's request for information on the scientific case against cigarette smoking (SGR Vol. IV, No. 20), the National Cancer Advisory Board has cited statistical studies as establishing a "dose-response relationship between the number of cigarettes smoked and cancer of the lung ... beyond doubt." The Board called for mandatory lowering of tar and nicotine levels, but said that pending that, the President should ask the tobacco industry for voluntary compliance.

Cancer (Continued): Cure "A Realistic Goal" But. . . .

most curable of the major diseases in this country."

Another of the most common cancers, that of the colon, accounts for eight percent of the total incidence of the disease. According to NCI's statistics, the 1940-49 survival rate was 32 percent. In 1950-59, it rose to 44 percent, which is exactly where it remains to this date.

In the case of cancer of the colon, as well as some others, the survival figures do worse than mock the official line that progress, though slow, is continual. Statistical quirks may be the cause, but the one-year survival rate for cancer of the colon has actually declined, according to figures soon to be published by NCI. In 1965-69, the one-year rate was 68 percent; in 1970-71, it had dropped to 65 percent. Several factors could account for this change, but not infrequently, one finds well-credentialed cancer researchers speculating that newly devised "treatments" may actually be adding to the toll.

In their presentations to Congress, NCI officials have recently expressed encouragement about treatments for leukemia and cancer of the cervix, and of late there has been much in the news about progress in treating breast cancer. Progress there has been, but again, regrettably, the official statistics do not support the optimistic claims.

Thus, the ACS states, "Only 10 years ago, anyone who spoke about curing leukemia was considered a charlatan. Today, the cure for leukemia is a realistic goal."

Survival Rates

However, the survival rates for leukemia, though apparently improving as a result of new chemotherapies, remain tragically low, according to NCI's tabulations. For the three categories that come under the heading of acute leukemia, the five-year survival rate in 1950-59 was one percent; for 1965-69, it had risen to three percent. In the same periods, the survival rate for chronic leukemia rose from 23 to 29 percent. Statisticians caution, however, that since the incidence of leukemia is relatively low (3.5 percent of all cancers) and diagnosis often so difficult, the margin for error is considerable. "I wouldn't be surprised if they're 'curing' a lot of leukemia that never existed," one statistician said.

The ACS also expresses optimism about uterine cancer, stating that "The death rate from this form of cancer in women has dropped over 50 percent in 30 years," adding that "Much of the credit for this dramatic decline is due to the Pap test, one of the most significant advances in early detection techniques." The official statistics, however, show that the ACS's hopeful report is both true and misleading. For cancer of the cervix uteri, which accounts for 5.8 percent of all cancers, the five-year survival rate in 1940-49 was 47 percent. By 1950-59, the survival figure had risen to 59 percent. By 1965-69, however, five-year survival had *declined* to 56 percent.

For cancer of the corpus uteri, which accounts for 3.5 percent of all cancers, the 1940-49 five-year survival figure was 61 percent. This rose to 71 percent in 1950-59; 73 percent in 1960-64, and 74 percent in 1965-69. Again, only thankfulness can be expressed for any improvement in survival rates, but what the figures show is that very little change has actually occurred since the 1950-59 period.

Breast Cancer

Female breast cancer, which accounts for 11.8 percent of all cancers, has long been the object of a public awareness campaign that presumably has resulted in some increased measure of early detection, which is an important element of effective treatment. Nevertheless, the changes in survival rates over the past 25 years have been surprisingly slight. In 1940-49, the five-year survival rate was 53 percent, when averaged out among cases detected at various stages of development. The rate improved to 60 percent during 1950-59, but despite the emphasis on early detection, and the much-heralded development of combined therapies involving surgery, radiation, and drugs, the most recent 5-year survival rate has risen to only 64 percent.

The oft-repeated and authoritative statement that Mrs. Rockefeller's chances of survival are 90 percent is indeed welcome news. But considering that she was the beneficiary of early detection and the most capable care, it is also worth noting that the three-year survival rate for her type of localized breast cancer was 89 percent in 1950-59, and has stood at 91 percent since then.

Going down the grim list of other major cancers, the five-year survival rate for cancer of the stomach has stood at 12 percent since 1950. For cancer of the rectum, it has remained at 40 percent over the same period. For cancer of the pancreas, the survival rate has stood at one percent since 1950-59. For cancer of the esophagus, survival has apparently declined, from a rate of four, down to three percent over the past 25 years.

Official Optimism

If these are NCI's own figures, what then accounts for the routinely official optimism, such as that expressed by NCI Director Frank J. Rauscher Jr., who wrote last January in *U.S. Medicine*, "The 5-year survival rate for cancer patients in the 1930s was about 1 in 5. Today, the figure is 1 in 3," the implication being that progress, though slow, is steady.

The answer is that the need to maintain public support for the war on cancer has inspired a bit of statistical sleight of hand. Rauscher is correct – survival rates have risen from about 1 in 5 in the 1930s to 1 in 3 today. However,

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. . . . Official Statistics Conflict with Optimism

virtually all of this improvement was achieved prior to 1955, which, ironically, was when federal spending for cancer research began to accelerate to its present level of $600 million a year. The cause of the improved survival rates prior to 1955 is not wholly understood, but one plausible explanation is that the postwar introduction of antibiotics and blood transfusions helped cut the toll from cancer surgery. It wasn't that more patients were surviving *cancer;* rather, they were surviving cancer *operations* that previously killed them. The result was a big statistical jump in the baseline for survival. But since 1955, when the toll from surgery became negligible, there has been little if any change in survival rates for the most common cancers.

Looked at another way, this analysis means that today's patient, who is supposedly the beneficiary of two decades of ever-expanding cancer research, has approximately the same chance for survival as a patient whose case was diagnosed before any of that research took place.

Leading Research Centers

The argument is, of course, raised that pioneering techniques at major cancer centers – which are few in number – are proving more effective than the traditional techniques, which are the stock in trade of lesser institutions. The task ahead, it is argued, is to implement the National Cancer Act's provision for enlarging the number of first-rate centers. But even here, one encounters skepticism among the statisticians. The research-oriented institutions can pick and choose their patients, one of the most renowned students of the numbers told SGR. "Clinical researchers don't like to treat dying patients, and poor risks can be sent elsewhere to die." Success rates at leading centers were described as difficult to obtain and highly ambiguous.

Is there perhaps some statistical peculiarity that can explain away the appearance of so little progress? SGR took up the question with one of the most eminent experts in the field, one who, curiously enough, is publicly on record as saying significant progress is being achieved. Privately however, he said the following:

"Actually, there has been little improvement since 1945." Whereupon, he explained changes that have taken place over the years in collecting data, problems of analysis, and the difficulty of drawing interpretations from the sampling of cases that are transformed into national statistics.

The sorrowful tale that SGR presents here would have no purpose if informed opinion widely held that the strategy underlying the national cancer program is fundamentally sound and, though results are slow in coming, no other way exists to achieve them.

However, travels through the cancer "establishment" reveal that such is not the case, though, shades of early Vietnam days, there is great reluctance to go public with dissent beyond the usual quibbles about the program's emphasis on "targeted" research.

Rather, a fair number of respectable persons at major research institutions are now saying that the emphasis on cure is misguided because cure is so elusive. Since this is so, they contend, resources should be shifted to prevention, for which a gusher of recent promising leads is being responded to with a paucity of money. Though the sums have, in fact, been increasing a bit in response to recent findings, such as the possibility of carcinogenic substances in water supplies, they remain small.

"Unconventional Research"

The dissenters point out that the generals in the war on cancer come from the ranks of surgery, biochemistry, radiology, and virology, and that their training and inclination is to carry on with what they have been doing ever since they began their careers.

It is interesting to note, for example, that after a decade of unsuccessfully searching for viruses in human cancers, NCI continues to support the quest at a cost of $57 million a year. Meanwhile, though there is voluminous and mounting evidence that nutrition plays a major role in the onset of cancer, NCI's spending on that line of inquiry is around $3 million. A partial explanation is that nutrition is a low-prestige field, and easily evokes the image of high school cafeteria dieticians, whereas virology wins Nobel prizes.

The Pauling Episode

The purpose here is not to question the motives or humanity of those who manage our vast national effort to cure cancer. Rather, it is to point out that great wars, whether military or medical, are necessarily conducted by large and complex bureaucracies. These embark on their missions with high hopes, accompanied by a tendency to see light at the end of long tunnels, and, perhaps most important of all, a quickness to consider dissenters as fainthearted, misguided, or even worse.

Consider, for example, what happened recently when Linus Pauling suggested to NCI that a small portion of its research funds be allocated for "unconventional research."

NCI Director Rauscher responded with a letter that, in part, stated: "In the sense that every grant and contract awarded by the Institute is based on an individual idea, we are pursuing such a policy now."

It sounds like what they told Billy Mitchell when he suggested that the airplane could be a serious weapon.

–DSG

The Energy Crisis: Drifting with Gerry Ford

The short-lived nomination of Andrew E. Gibson to head the Federal Energy Administration (FEA) may say a great deal about Gerald Ford's lack of discrimination in choosing key aides, but from the perspective of energy policy, it is only a minor aberration in an astonishing chain of events stretching back over the past 19 months.

Gibson, who was named to replace the ousted John Sawhill, was hastily taken out of the running when it became known that he will be getting $880,000 over the next 10 years from a shipping concern closely associated with the oil industry. Had he been confirmed, he would have been the sixth key energy official appointed since April last year to head the constantly changing energy bureaucracy.

In view of the quicksands and political backstabbing which have characterized the government's reactions to the energy crisis, it's small wonder that no coherent energy policy has yet emerged from Washington. For a start, every major pronouncement from both Nixon and Ford on energy matters has been accompanied by a bureaucratic shakeup which has meant that no energy planning group has survived long enough to have much of an impact, and the operation has been placed in the hands of a rapidly changing cast of characters whose one common denominator is that none of them had much relevant experience when appointed.

Originally, the chief responsibility for energy policy fell to John Ehrlichman in his capacity as Chairman of the Domestic Council. But when the White House came under siege and Ehrlichman became otherwise engaged, Nixon announced in April 1973 that the energy "challenge" would be dealt with by a new National Energy Office in the White House, which would advise on policy. To head the office, he recruited Charles DiBona, a national security analyst.

But that arrangement didn't last long, for as the energy crisis deepened and Nixon's political troubles worsened, he resorted to a quick succession of bureaucratic maneuverings designed to give the impression that he had everything under control.

A few weeks after DiBona's appointment, Nixon announced that a more powerful arrangement was necessary, and that Colorado Governor John Love would come to Washington to head a new National Energy Policy Office, which would coordinate and develop policies. DiBona was given the job of consultant.

Then, in October, when Nixon finally admitted the existence of an energy crisis, he decided that another bureaucratic shakeup was in order, and created the Federal Energy Office, equipped it with a large staff, and appointed a spectacularly successful Wall Street gambler, William Simon, as its boss. Love sadly returned to Colorado to practice law, DiBona quit to become executive director of

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An Ex-insider's Commentary on an Esteemed "Think Tank"

The following is excerpted from a paper, "Neutrality and Advocacy in Policy Research," by Harold Orlans, formerly of the Brookings Institution, now on the staff of the National Academy of Public Administration Foundation, as presented to the 1974 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association:

The Brookings Institution claims no responsibility for the work of its staff. "The Institution," its disclaimer states, "maintains its position of neutrality on issues of public policy, in order to safeguard the intellectual freedom of the staff." Yet few Republicans or radicals, theorists or institutional economists enjoy that freedom. It is not difficult to compile a list of economists too distinguished, conservative, or independent-minded to be comfortable there. All projects and manuscripts must be personally approved by the president who often changes words he dislikes; bulletin boards are also censored, notices deemed offensive (often, humorous comments on the Brookings administration) being removed. Staff who offend the regime are dismissed without a hearing or statement of cause and the distinguished board, which has few discernible functions besides investment counselling and window dressing, may not even reply to an appeal. "Conflict of interest" means what the president says it means and some of his judgments are sharply contradictory. Staff believe that a few economists enjoy special privileges whereas the rest must swelter under blankets of committees, anonymous readers, endless redrafts and delays in quest of the inimitable Brookings soporificity. The "freedom" of Brookings staff is just another word for conformity.

Brookings is exceptional in several ways – its antiquity, endowment, leisureliness, costliness, the quality of its typography and its relations with the Ford Foundation (which, it is said, is like a cow milking herself). Its good staff are handicapped by an incompetent, monarchical administration; still, it remains one of our more significant and respected policy institutes. If it fails some of its public and intellectual responsibilities, many institutes fail more abysmally.

Rep. Hosmer's "Last Hurrah" Foresees Decline of the JCAE

The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE) may soon "fade into memory" and the nuclear industry's concerns will be piled "beneath new, numerous and strange layers of inertia and budgetary remoteness" in the federal government.

That's the prediction lugubriously offered last month by Craig Hosmer (R-Calif.), one of the more colorful of the nuclear enthusiasts who have dominated the JCAE for most of its lifetime. Hosmer, who is retiring from Congress at the end of this year, made those remarks in a speech – which he called his "last hurrah" – to the Atomic Industrial Forum in Washington.

Chief reason for the demise of the JCAE, according to Hosmer, is the reorganization of House committee functions which will cause some of JCAE's responsibilities to be shared with other committees.

"As I see it," Hosmer said, "most members of the JCAE are pretty knowledgeable. They understand the atom. They know the intrinsic value of all forms of energy to a power dependent industrial society. But many other legislators are far less knowledgeable and sanguine." In other words, the concerns of the nuclear industry may well end up in the hands of Congressmen who exercise some skepticism about the potential for nuclear power.

Hosmer's prediction of the legislative decline of the JCAE may be correct, but ironically, the chief threat to the committee may well come from within its own ranks rather than from other committees muscling in on the action.

At the end of this year, a third of the JCAE's 18 members will be leaving Congress, either through retirement or because they were defeated in last month's election. The committee has traditionally been stacked with ardent supporters of the power of the atom, but the chances are that at least one of the vacant seats will go to a Senator or a Congressman who doesn't share that enthusiasm.

As for the possibility that the nuclear industry's concerns will get lost in the Washington bureaucracy, Hosmer bases that prediction on the fact that the AEC will be abolished at the end of the year and replaced by the Energy Research and Development Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. For one thing, nuclear power will be only one of six divisions in ERDA, and consequently it will have to compete directly for funds with other energy technologies (SGR, Vol. IV, No. 19). And for another, Hosmer is concerned about the quality of the bureaucrats that will be attracted to the new agency.

The industry's concerns, he said, "will be smothered by unfamiliar legions of the unwanted bizarre and freakish lings and underlings who at such times are enterprisingly shucked off by old line agencies and gravitate to become the initial inhabitants of a new government body."

"In such a milieu," Hosmer surmised, "members of the nuclear fraternity are less likely to be voices crying from the wilderness than they are voices crying from the bottom of the pit."

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the petroleum industry's chief lobbying outfit, and the name of the Federal Energy Office was subsequently changed to the Federal Energy Administration when Congress eventually gave it a legislative mandate.

It's important to note here a couple of points which later became crucial. The first is that the appearance of FEA on the Washington landscape cut into the responsibilities of several existing departments and agencies, with the chief loser being the Department of the Interior. And the second is that to cope with the Arab oil embargo, the FEA was rapidly turned into little more than a supply agency devoted principally to day-to-day operations.

Simon's energy czarship lasted until April this year, when he was elevated to Secretary of the Treasury, and the energy job was passed along to his deputy, John Sawhill. In his six-months reign, Sawhill was widely regarded as an effective administrator, but his problem was that he outspokenly advocated such revolutionary concepts as mandatory energy conservation, and his former boss, Simon, retained a powerful lever on energy policy by hanging on to the chairmanship of an inter-agency energy coordinating committee. His downfall came, however, when Gerald Ford entered the White House.

Like his predecessor, Ford decided that the best way to create an impression that he was doing something about the energy crisis would be to establish a new bureaucratic arrangement. In his first major policy speech, he therefore announced that he would be setting up an Energy Resources Council to develop energy policies, and that an old Congressional colleague, Rogers C. B. Morton, the Secretary of Interior, would be put in charge.

Having got back much of the jurisdictional patch which the Interior Department lost to FEA in the first place, Morton rapidly forced Sawhill's ouster and Gibson got the nod.

Once his complete unsuitability for the post became obvious, Gibson's nomination was withdrawn, and Ford let it be known that he will nominate Frank Zarb as energy administrator. An OMB official who has been concerned with science and energy matters, Zarb will at least bring some relevant experience with him, but equally important is the fact that he has been working closely with Morton as executive director of the fledgling Energy Resources Council.–CN

Chilean Medical Society Accused of Purge Role

Although it is by now widely established that the military junta which overthrew the government of Salvador Allende in Chile last year has shot, tortured and imprisoned many of Allende's supporters, what is not so well known is that the Colegio Medico – the Chilean equivalent of the AMA – probably played an active role in the harrassment of left-wing physicians by denouncing them to the military rulers.

Strong evidence to that effect has been gathered by a team of three US physicians who visited Chile this summer under the auspices of the Federation of American Scientists.

The Colegio Medico, membership in which is compulsory for practicing physicians in Chile, demonstrated its opposition to the Allende government by twice calling strikes and demanding Allende's resignation, but after the military coup in September 1973, the Colegio played a more insidious role.

First, a physician, Dr. Carlos Shuster, wrote a letter to the Rector of the University of Chile, suggesting that all physicians be classified into three groups: those above suspicion, those with leftist sympathies, and those "beyond rehabilitation." This letter, the FAS report suggests, "apparently served as the basis for summary judgments in many institutions in the days immediately after the coup. It also seems to have suggested to authorities a general system of classification of health workers into A, B and C lists."

The A list consisted of health workers considered necessary in their posts and above political approach, the B list contained names of people who "were both dispensable and had leftist tendencies," and those on the C list were "potential activists and militants" who were to be dismissed from the National Health Service.

The lists were compiled by directors of hospitals and other officials, and the FAS team points out that "while we were unable to obtain direct evidence, it seems probable that officials of the Colegio Medico, on the national and local levels, were involved in preparing lists of physicians considered not only dangerous but also politically unacceptable."

"Appearance on the list had various effects," the report states. "In some cases, it appears that certain physicians were marked for death. Approximately fifteen of the most militant were either summarily shot or disappeared in suspicious circumstances during the first days after the coup. Others, particularly those in positions of responsibility, were arrested either immediately or within several months thereafter."

The report later states that "we have good evidence of 176 physicians who have been suspended and only 20 of these so far reinstated," and adds that "we have in our possession a list of 109 physicians who had been imprisoned prior to June of 1974." Furthermore, about 200 physicians have left Chile since the coup, a loss which "represents still another tragic aspect of Chile's political upheavals," the report notes.

As for allegations of torture of political prisoners, the report states that "there is evidence that suggests that torture occurred not as isolated events but in a systematic fashion. This is supported by widespread occurrence of the practice ... and the relatively sophisticated techniques which involve both the use of electricity and sensory deprivation."

The report notes that frequent references were made "to an American training camp in Panama where South American military officers are indoctrinated in techniques of resisting torture, thereby providing information on the technology of torture. We were also told of the use of American equipment, such as electrical generators."

Although the report is quick to acknowledge that "by reporting these allegations we do not mean to necessarily imply credibility ... we do feel that, in view of the widespread perception of an American involvement, there is a critical need for an American investigation of these rumors."

The survey was conducted by Dr. Leonard Shapiro of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic; Dr. Albert Jonsen of the University of California, San Francisco, and Dr. Alfred Paredes of the University of Oklahoma. Copies of the report are available from the Federation of American Scientists, 301 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Chemical Society Goes Straight

The American Chemical Society, which has been directed for three years by activist presidents who have transformed it into a forceful professional organization, will soon be returned to more traditional styles of leadership. Glenn T. Seaborg, a nuclear chemist who was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission from 1961 to 1971, has been elected ACS President, beginning in 1976.

Seaborg, who is a past president of the AAAS and who has been blessed with pretty well every scientific honor going, including the Nobel Prize, was chosen ACS President-elect last month over one "official" candidate and a reform candidate who was added to the ballot by petition.

His election seems to break the trend established in 1971 when Alan Nixon, a retired chemist from California secured the presidency of ACS after a campaign in which he promised a radical shakeup of the society's operations to make it more responsive to the professional needs of its members.

Education Institute Wins Congressional Reprieve

The National Institute of Education has emerged from its latest Congressional trauma minus $60 million and two top officials.

The budget verdict came last month, when a long-delayed House-Senate conference completed action on an HEW appropriations bill for the fiscal year that began last July 1. The Senate, which is the mainspring of hostility to NIE, had turned down an Administration request for $130 million; it also recommended that NIE be cut off without any funds and folded back into the Office of Education, from whence its programs were extracted three years ago in an effort to enliven educational research (SGR, Vol. IV, No. 16). The leading exponent of this harsh formula was Senator Warren G. Magnuson (D-Wash.), who though impossibly cranky, is routinely deferred to by his colleagues since he chairs the subcommittee that handles HEW's multi--billion budget, which includes the NIE's.

Since outright termination of a federal agency is virtually unpredecented, the Senate conferees, as expected, yielded to pleas for clemency, but would go no further than an appropriation of $70 million, which was even $10 million below what the kindlier House had voted. The money was accompanied by a stipulation that NIE's grantee institutions may not use the agency's funds for salaries that exceed the $36,000 a year paid the NIE director – which is causing some consternation out there in the upper brackets of the educational research establishment.

Meanwhile, the NIE directorship remains vacant, following the resignation of its founding chief, Thomas K. Glennan Jr., who offered himself as a sacrifice in an unsuccessful effort to appease Magnuson. (Glennan, an economist who was formerly director of research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, has now joined the staff of the National Academy of Sciences Assembly of Behavioral and Social Sciences, where he is heading a study of research on social problems.)

Also departing via the resignation route is Patrick E. Haggerty, founding chairman of the National Council on Educational Research, which is responsible for setting NIE's basic policies. Haggerty cited his wife's illness for his resignation, but he was also known to be fed up with NIE's enduring difficulties. In addition, as board chairman of Texas Instruments, he has been heavily involved in efforts to reverse that company's suddenly declining fortunes.

Replacements for the two resigned officials are said to be in the works.

Ford Denies Funds for New Burn Injury Research Program

Want a good example of how badly things are out of whack in priorities for federal R&D expenditures?

Consider, then, the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, which was signed into law a few weeks back, to the accompaniment of a press release stating, "The Ford Administration and the Congress today took a major step to help States and local communities sharply reduce America's tragic losses from fire – including $11 billion in property damage and other wasted resources, 12,000 deaths, and tens of thousands of injuries annually."

The Act, which is to be administered by the Department of Commerce, provides for the establishment of a National Fire Prevention and Control Administration, a Fire Research Center, a National Academy for Fire Prevention and Control, plus various data collection and education programs. In addition, it directs HEW to establish 25 burn treatment centers, 90 "burn programs," and 25 centers for expanded research on burns.

In lauding passage of the bill, the Commerce Department announced that "$6 million has been appropriated for on-going programs" for the current fiscal year, but noted that the President, in signing the bill into law, had stated that he would not seek funds for the HEW portion of the program. Said Mr. Ford, "Since these (HEW) centers would duplicate the burn research carried on through the trauma program of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) and would add $5 million to the FY 75 budget, I will not seek appropriations to implement this particular provision of the bill."

The NIGMS trauma program to which the President referred currently provides a total of $5 million for nine trauma centers. These deal with a variety of traumas, and only two conduct programs directly related to burns.

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French Leader Says European Science Faring Well

An off-the-shelf ploy for pressuring governments into boosting support for research is the contention that greater generosity prevails in other lands and that unwelcome "gaps" will ensue if the hometeam's bounty is not increased.

Throughout the postwar period, the constancy of this claim has been so durable that proper note should be taken of what may well be an historic departure: formal acknowledgement by a French statesman of science that his own side is now faring quite well relative to the American competition.

This uncommonly cheerful assessment is expressed in the November *Physics Today* by Pierre Aigrain, former General Delegate for Scientific and Technical Research (roughly the equivalent of our presidential science adviser) and currently general technical director of the Thompson-Brandt Corporation, in Paris. American-educated, and recently returned to Paris from a visiting appointment at MIT, Aigrain is well acquainted with R&D policies and troubles on both sides of the Atlantic, and, though often severely critical of affairs in his own country, offers the view that European science is weathering the inflationary crisis better than its American counterpart.

"The reason," he explains, "is that for the most part scientists working at universities or in laboratories supported by the government are in effect government employes and receive automatic cost-of-living increases.

"Now that the dollar has been devalued, salaries for scientists in Europe are comparable to salaries of U.S. scientists ... For example, the salary in France for a university professor in the top 10% is about $25,000 a year. If you take into account the much lower income tax in France, this figure is not far from the $32,000 a professor in the top 10% receives in the U.S. ... Additional financial benefits are socialized medicine – fairly uniform all over Europe – and free education. ...

"Since positions are essentially government positions, tenure, or *de facto* tenure, is almost universal. Thus, in France, teaching assistants at the universities have tenure as government employes and cannot be fired or even transferred, except by a judicial process.

"The 'publish-or-perish' syndrome does not exist in Europe. Promotions depend on reviews by a committee of elected peers. In judging an individual's scientific merit, the committee takes into account all aspects of his contributions to the field."

Aigrain notes that European spending on energy R&D has not, as in the U.S., increased rapidly, but he concludes that the reason is a good one. "When the energy crisis came along," he states, "it gave only a slight boost to these budgets because they were already high, while the U.S. – which was spending ridiculously small amounts on this type of R&D – is now suddenly planning to spend ridiculously large amounts in this area. I doubt if good use can be made of the funds that are abruptly poured into an area in this way. First of all, it detracts from the funding for other areas. And five or six years from now, when people conclude that none of this research has helped the least bit in solving the energy crisis, the budgets will be cut off and you will have repeated what happened with the space program. ...

"Although I don't see very fast increases in European funding on the horizon, especially for physics, on the other hand I don't see the risk of a collapse of support for science such as the U.S. nearly had a few years ago. I do not think this will occur in Europe. For one thing, the Europeans generally have a large inertia. It takes really catastrophic events to change the course of things. The most likely thing is a continued leveling off, which we can hope will turn into a modest positive slope provided we can develop enough public understanding."

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